WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

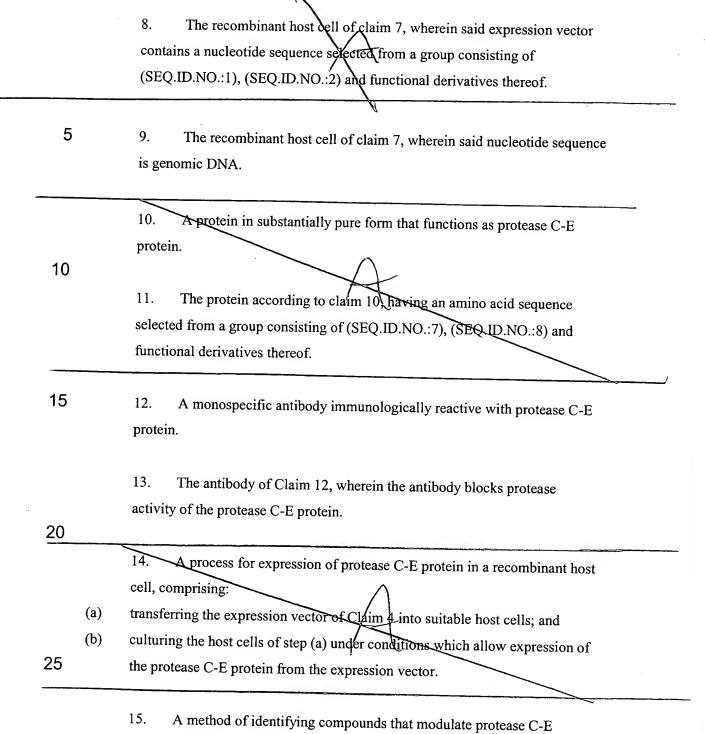
- An isolated and purified nucleic acid molecule that encodes protease C-E, and functional derivatives thereof.
- The isolated and purified nucleic acid molecule of claim 1, having a nucleotide sequence selected from a group consisting of: (SEQ.ID.NO.:1), (SEQ.ID.NO.:2) and functional derivatives thereof.
- The isolated and parified nucleic acid molecule of claim 1, wherein said molecule is selected from a group consisting of DNA, genomic DNA, cDNA, RNA and mRNA.
 - 4. An expression vector for expression of protease C-E protein in a recombinant host, wherein said vector contains a nucleic acid molecule having a nucleotide sequence encoding protease C-E protein, and functional derivatives thereof.
 - 5. The expression vector of claim 4, wherein the expression vector contains a nucleotide sequence encoding protease C-E protein selected from a group consisting of (SEQ.ID.NO.:1), (SEQ.ID.NO.:2) and functional derivatives thereof.
 - 6. The expression vector of claim 4, wherein the nucleic acid molecule encoding protease C-E protein is genomic DNA.

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7. A recombinant host cell containing the expression vector of claim 4.



protein activity, comprising:

combining a modulator of protease C-E protein activity, protease C-E protein,

(a)

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and a labeled substrate; and

(b) measuring a change in the labeled substrate. 16. The method of claim 15 wherein the labeled substrate is selected from the group consisting of flourogenic, colormetric, radiometric, and fluorescent resonance energy transfer (FRET). 17. A compound active in the method of Claim 15, wherein said compound is a modulator of protease C-E serine protease activity. 18. The compound of Claim 16, wherein said compound is an agonist or antagonist of protease C-E serine protease activity. 19. The compound of Claim 16, wherein said compound is a modulator of expression of protease C-E serine protein. 20. A method of treating a patient in need of such treatment for a condition that is mediated by protease C-E, comprising administration of the compound of Claim 16. A kit comprising a nucleic acid sequence selected from a group consisting of SEQ.ID.NO.:1 and SEQ.ID.NO.:2, and fragments thereof.

A kit comprising a serine protease C-E protein having an amino acid

A pharmaceutical composition comprising the protein of claim 10.

sequence selected from the group consisting of SEO.HD.NO.:7 and

SEQ.ID.NO.:8, and fragments or derivatives thereof.

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- The pharmaceutical composition of claim 23 wherein said composition is a topical skin care composition.
- 5 A non-pharmaceutical composition comprising the protein of claim 10.
 - 26. The non-pharmaceutical composition of claim 25 wherein the formulation is selected from the group consisting of laundry detergent, shampoo, hard surface cleaning compositions, and dish care cleaning composition.
 - 27. A method of treating an imbalance of desquamation comprising topical application of the composition of claim 24.